

Initiative Measure No. 1495

filed March 2, 2016

BILL REQUEST - CODE REVISER'S OFFICE

BILL REQ. #: I-3193.1/16

ATTY/TYPIST: KS:eab

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

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chapter to Title 7 RCW; and prescribing penalties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** INTENT. (1) This act is designed to temporarily prevent individuals who are at high risk of harming themselves or others from accessing firearms by allowing family, household members, and police to obtain a court order when there is demonstrated evidence that the person poses a significant danger, including danger as a result of a dangerous mental health crisis or violent behavior.

(2) Every year, over one hundred thousand people are victims of gunshot wounds and more than thirty thousand of those victims lose their lives. Over the last five years for which data is available, one hundred sixty-four thousand eight hundred twenty-one people in America were killed with firearms—an average of ninety-one deaths each day.

(3) Studies show that individuals who engage in certain dangerous behaviors are significantly more likely to commit violence toward themselves or others in the near future. These behaviors, which can include other acts or threats of violence, self-harm, or the abuse of drugs or alcohol, are warning signs that the person may soon commit an act of violence.

(4) Individuals who pose a danger to themselves or others often exhibit signs that alert family, household members, or law enforcement to the threat. Many mass shooters displayed warning signs prior to their killings, but federal and state laws provided no clear legal process to suspend the shooters' access to guns, even temporarily.

(5) In enacting this initiative, it is the purpose and intent of the people to reduce gun deaths and injuries, while respecting constitutional rights, by providing a court procedure for family, household members, and law enforcement to obtain an order

temporarily restricting a person's access to firearms. Court orders are intended to be limited to situations in which the person poses a significant danger of harming themselves or others by possessing a firearm and include standards and safeguards to protect the rights of respondents and due process of law.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** SHORT TITLE. This act may be known and cited as the emergency protection order act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** DEFINITIONS. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Emergency protection order" means an ex parte temporary order or a final order granted under this chapter.

(2) "Family or household member" means, with respect to a respondent, any: (a) Person related by blood, marriage, or adoption to the respondent; (b) Dating partners of the respondent; (c) Person who has a child in common with the respondent, regardless of whether such person has been married to the respondent or has lived together with the respondent at any time; (d) Person who resides or has resided with the respondent within the past year; (e) Domestic partner of the respondent; (f) Person who has a biological or legal parent-child relationship with the respondent, including stepparents and stepchildren and grandparents and grandchildren; and (g) Person who is acting or has acted as the respondent's legal guardian.

(3) "Petitioner" means the person who petitions for an order under this chapter.

(4) "Respondent" means the person who is identified as the respondent in a petition filed under this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** PETITION FOR AN EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDER. There shall exist an action known as a petition for an emergency protection order.

(1) A petition for an emergency protection order may be filed by (a) a family or household member of the respondent or (b) a law enforcement officer or agency.

(2) An action under this chapter must be filed in the county where the petitioner resides or the county where the respondent resides.

(3) A petition must:

(a) Allege that the respondent poses a significant danger of causing personal injury to self or others by having in his or her custody or control, purchasing, possessing, or receiving a firearm, and be accompanied by an affidavit made under oath stating the specific statements, actions, or facts that give rise to a reasonable fear of future dangerous acts by the respondent;

(b) Identify the number, types, and locations of any firearms the petitioner believes to be in the respondent's current ownership, possession, custody, or control;

(c) Identify whether there is a known existing protection order governing the respondent, under chapter 7.90, 7.92, 10.14, 9A.46, 10.99, 26.50, or 26.52 RCW or under any other applicable statute; and

(d) Identify whether there is a pending lawsuit, complaint, petition, or other action between the parties to the petition under the laws of Washington.

(4) The court administrator shall verify the terms of any existing order governing the parties. The court may not delay granting relief because of the existence of a pending action between the parties or the necessity of verifying the terms of an existing order. A petition for an emergency protection order may be granted whether or not there is a pending action between the parties.

(5) If the petitioner is a law enforcement officer or agency, the petitioner shall make a good faith effort to provide notice to a family or household member of the respondent and to any known third party who may be at risk of violence. The notice must state that the petitioner intends to petition the court for an emergency protection

order or has already done so, and include referrals to appropriate resources, including mental health, domestic violence, and counseling resources. The petitioner must attest in the petition to having provided such notice, or attest to the steps that will be taken to provide such notice.

(6) If the petition states that disclosure of the petitioner's address would risk harm to the petitioner or any member of the petitioner's family or household, the petitioner's address may be omitted from all documents filed with the court. If the petitioner has not disclosed an address under this subsection, the petitioner must designate an alternative address at which the respondent may serve notice of any motions. If the petitioner is a law enforcement officer or agency, the address of record must be that of the law enforcement agency.

(7) Within ninety days of receipt of the master copy from the administrative office of the courts, all court clerk's offices shall make available the standardized forms, instructions, and informational brochures required by section 16 of this act. Any assistance or information provided by clerks under this section does not constitute the practice of law and clerks are not responsible for incorrect information contained in a petition.

(8) No fees for filing or service of process may be charged by a court or any public agency to petitioners seeking relief under this chapter. Petitioners shall be provided the necessary number of certified copies, forms, and instructional brochures free of charge.

(9) A person is not required to post a bond to obtain relief in any proceeding under this section.

(10) The superior courts of the state of Washington have jurisdiction over proceedings under this chapter. Additionally, district and municipal courts have limited jurisdiction over issuance and enforcement of ex parte emergency protection orders issued under section 6 of this act. The district or municipal court shall set the full hearing provided for in section 5 of this act in superior court and transfer the case. If the notice and order are

not served on the respondent in time for the full hearing, the issuing court has concurrent jurisdiction with the superior court to extend the ex parte emergency protection order.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDER HEARINGS AND ISSUANCE. (1) Upon receipt of the petition, the court shall order a hearing to be held not later than fourteen days from the date of the order and issue a notice of hearing to the respondent for the same.

 (a) The court may schedule a hearing by telephone pursuant to local court rule, to reasonably accommodate a disability, or in exceptional circumstances to protect a petitioner from potential harm. The court shall require assurances of the petitioner's identity before conducting a telephonic hearing.

 (b) The court clerk shall cause a copy of the notice of hearing and petition to be forwarded on or before the next judicial day to the appropriate law enforcement agency for service upon the respondent.

 (c) Personal service of the notice of hearing and petition shall be made upon the respondent by a law enforcement officer not less than five court days prior to the hearing. Service issued under this section takes precedence over the service of other documents, unless the other documents are of a similar emergency nature. If timely personal service cannot be made, the court shall set a new hearing date and shall either require additional attempts at obtaining personal service or permit service by publication or mail as provided in section 8 of this act. The court shall not require more than two attempts at obtaining personal service and shall permit service by publication or mail after two attempts at obtaining personal service unless the petitioner requests additional time to attempt personal service. If the court issues an order permitting service by publication or mail, the court shall set the hearing date not later than twenty-four days from the date the order issues.

 (d) The court may, as provided in section 6 of this act, issue an ex parte emergency protection order pending the hearing ordered

under this subsection (1). Such ex parte order must be served concurrently with the notice of hearing and petition.

(2) Upon hearing the matter, if the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the respondent poses a significant danger of causing personal injury to self or others by having in his or her custody or control, purchasing, possessing, or receiving a firearm, the court shall issue an emergency protection order for a period of one year.

(3) In determining whether grounds for an emergency protection order exist, the court may consider any relevant evidence including, but not limited to, any of the following:

(a) A recent act or threat of violence by the respondent against self or others, whether or not such violence or threat of violence involves a firearm;

(b) A pattern of acts or threats of violence by the respondent within the past twelve months including, but not limited to, acts or threats of violence by the respondent against self or others;

(c) Any dangerous mental health issues of the respondent;

(d) A violation by the respondent of a protection order or a no-contact order issued under chapter 7.90, 7.92, 10.14, 9A.46, 10.99, 26.50, or 26.52 RCW;

(e) A previous or existing emergency protection order issued against the respondent;

(f) A violation of a previous or existing emergency protection order issued against the respondent;

(g) A conviction of the respondent for a crime that constitutes domestic violence as defined in RCW 10.99.020;

(h) The respondent's ownership, access to, or intent to possess firearms;

(i) The unlawful or reckless use, display, or brandishing of a firearm by the respondent;

(j) The history of use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force by the respondent against another person, or the respondent's history of stalking another person;

(k) Any prior arrest of the respondent for a felony offense or violent crime;

(l) Corroborated evidence of the abuse of controlled substances or alcohol by the respondent; and

(m) Evidence of recent acquisition of firearms by the respondent.

(4) The court may:

(a) Examine under oath the petitioner, the respondent, and any witnesses they may produce, or, in lieu of examination, consider sworn affidavits of the petitioner, the respondent, and any witnesses they may produce; and

(b) Ensure that a reasonable search has been conducted for criminal history records related to the respondent.

(5) In a hearing under this chapter, the rules of evidence apply to the same extent as in a domestic violence protection order proceeding under chapter 26.50 RCW.

(6) During the hearing, the court shall consider whether a mental health evaluation or chemical dependency evaluation is appropriate, and may order such evaluation if appropriate.

(7) An emergency protection order must include:

(a) A statement of the grounds supporting the issuance of the order;

(b) The date and time the order was issued;

(c) The date and time the order expires;

(d) Whether a mental health evaluation or chemical dependency evaluation of the respondent is required;

(e) The address of the court in which any responsive pleading should be filed;

(f) A description of the requirements for relinquishment of firearms under section 10 of this act; and

(g) The following statement: "To the subject of this protection order: This order will last until the date and time noted above. If you have not done so already, you must surrender to the (insert name of local law enforcement agency) all firearms in your custody,

control, or possession and any concealed pistol license issued to you under RCW 9.41.070 immediately. You may not have in your custody or control, purchase, possess, receive, or attempt to purchase or receive, a firearm while this order is in effect. You have the right to request one hearing to terminate this order every twelve-month period that this order is in effect, starting from the date of this order and continuing through any renewals. You may seek the advice of an attorney as to any matter connected with this order."

(8) When the court issues an emergency protection order, the court shall inform the respondent that he or she is entitled to request termination of the order in the manner prescribed by section 9 of this act. The court shall provide the respondent with a form to request a termination hearing.

(9) If the court declines to issue an emergency protection order, the court shall state the particular reasons for the court's denial.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** EX PARTE EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDERS.

(1) A petitioner may request that an ex parte emergency protection order be issued before a hearing for an emergency protection order, without notice to the respondent, by including in the petition detailed allegations based on personal knowledge that the respondent poses a significant danger of causing personal injury to self or others in the near future by having in his or her custody or control, purchasing, possessing, or receiving a firearm.

(2) In considering whether to issue an ex parte emergency protection order under this section, the court shall consider all relevant evidence, including the evidence described in section 5(3) of this act.

(3) If a court finds there is reasonable cause to believe that the respondent poses a significant danger of causing personal injury to self or others in the near future by having in his or her custody or control, purchasing, possessing, or receiving a firearm, the court shall issue an ex parte emergency protection order.

(4) The court shall hold an ex parte emergency protection order hearing in person or by telephone on the day the petition is filed or on the judicial day immediately following the day the petition is filed.

(5) In accordance with section 5(1) of this act, the court shall schedule a hearing within fourteen days of the issuance of an ex parte emergency protection order to determine if a one-year emergency protection order should be issued under this chapter.

(6) An ex parte emergency protection order shall include:

- (a) A statement of the grounds asserted for the order;
- (b) The date and time the order was issued;
- (c) The date and time the order expires;
- (d) The address of the court in which any responsive pleading should be filed;
- (e) The date and time of the scheduled hearing;
- (f) A description of the requirements for surrender of firearms under section 10 of this act; and

(g) The following statement: "To the subject of this protection order: This order is valid until the date and time noted above. You are required to surrender all firearms in your custody, control, or possession. You may not have in your custody or control, purchase, possess, receive, or attempt to purchase or receive, a firearm while this order is in effect. You must surrender to the (insert name of local law enforcement agency) all firearms in your custody, control, or possession and any concealed pistol license issued to you under RCW 9.41.070 immediately. A hearing will be held on the date and at the time noted above to determine if an emergency protection order should be issued. Failure to appear at that hearing may result in a court making an order against you that is valid for one year. You may seek the advice of an attorney as to any matter connected with this order."

(7) Any ex parte emergency protection order issued expires upon the hearing on the emergency protection order.

(8) An ex parte emergency protection order shall be served by a law enforcement officer in the same manner as provided for in section 5 of this act for service of the notice of hearing and petition, and shall be served concurrently with the notice of hearing and petition.

(9) If the court declines to issue an ex parte emergency protection order, the court shall state the particular reasons for the court's denial.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** SERVICE OF EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDERS.

(1) An emergency protection order issued under section 5 of this act must be personally served upon the respondent, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

(2) The law enforcement agency with jurisdiction in the area in which the respondent resides shall serve the respondent personally, unless the petitioner elects to have the respondent served by a private party.

(3) If service by a law enforcement agency is to be used, the clerk of the court shall cause a copy of the order issued under this chapter to be forwarded on or before the next judicial day to the law enforcement agency specified in the order for service upon the respondent. Service of an order issued under this chapter takes precedence over the service of other documents, unless the other documents are of a similar emergency nature.

(4) If the law enforcement agency cannot complete service upon the respondent within ten days, the law enforcement agency shall notify the petitioner. The petitioner shall provide information sufficient to permit such notification.

(5) If an order entered by the court recites that the respondent appeared in person before the court, the necessity for further service is waived and proof of service of that order is not necessary.

(6) If the court previously entered an order allowing service of the notice of hearing and petition, or an ex parte emergency

(2) If the court orders service by publication or mail for notice of an emergency protection order hearing, it shall also reissue the ex parte emergency protection order, if issued, to expire on the date of the emergency protection order hearing.

(3) Following completion of service by publication or by mail for notice of an emergency protection order hearing, if the respondent fails to appear at the hearing, the court may issue an emergency protection order as provided in section 5 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** TERMINATION AND RENEWAL OF ORDERS. (1)
The respondent may submit one written request for a hearing to terminate an emergency protection order issued under this chapter every twelve-month period that the order is in effect, starting from the date of the order and continuing through any renewals.

(a) Upon receipt of the request for a hearing to terminate an emergency protection order, the court shall set a date for a hearing. Notice of the request must be served on the petitioner in accordance with RCW 4.28.080. The hearing shall occur no sooner than fourteen days and no later than thirty days from the date of service of the request upon the petitioner.

(b) The respondent shall have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the respondent does not pose a significant danger of causing personal injury to self or others by having in his or her custody or control, purchasing, possessing, or receiving a firearm. The court may consider any relevant evidence, including evidence of the considerations listed in section 5(3) of this act.

(c) If the court finds after the hearing that the respondent has met his or her burden, the court shall terminate the order.

(2) The court must notify the petitioner of the impending expiration of an emergency protection order. Notice must be received

by the petitioner one hundred five calendar days before the date the order expires.

(3) A family or household member of a respondent or a law enforcement officer or agency may by motion request a renewal of an emergency protection order at any time within one hundred five calendar days before the expiration of the order.

(a) Upon receipt of the motion to renew, the court shall order that a hearing be held not later than fourteen days from the date the order issues.

(i) The court may schedule a hearing by telephone in the manner prescribed by section 5(1)(a) of this act.

(ii) The respondent shall be personally served in the same manner prescribed by section 5(1)(b) and (c) of this act.

(b) In determining whether to renew an emergency protection order issued under this section, the court shall consider all relevant evidence presented by the petitioner and follow the same procedure as provided in section 5 of this act.

(c) If the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the requirements for issuance of an emergency protection order as provided in section 5 of this act continue to be met, the court shall renew the order. However, if, after notice, the motion for renewal is uncontested and the petitioner seeks no modification of the order, the order may be renewed on the basis of the petitioner's motion or affidavit stating that there has been no material change in relevant circumstances since entry of the order and stating the reason for the requested renewal.

(d) The renewal of an emergency protection order has a duration of one year, subject to termination as provided in subsection (1) of this section or further renewal by order of the court.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** SURRENDER OF FIREARMS. (1) Upon issuance of any emergency protection order under this chapter, including an ex parte emergency protection order, the court shall order the respondent to surrender to the local law enforcement

agency all firearms in the respondent's custody, control, or possession and any concealed pistol license issued under RCW 9.41.070.

(2) The law enforcement officer serving any emergency protection order under this chapter, including an ex parte emergency protection order, shall request that the respondent immediately surrender all firearms in his or her custody, control, or possession and any concealed pistol license issued under RCW 9.41.070, and conduct any search permitted by law for such firearms. The law enforcement officer shall take possession of all firearms belonging to the respondent that are surrendered, in plain sight, or discovered pursuant to a lawful search. Alternatively, if personal service by a law enforcement officer is not possible, or not required because the respondent was present at the emergency protection order hearing, the respondent shall surrender the firearms in a safe manner to the control of the local law enforcement agency within forty-eight hours of being served with the order by alternate service or within forty-eight hours of the hearing at which the respondent was present.

(3) At the time of surrender, a law enforcement officer taking possession of a firearm or concealed pistol license shall issue a receipt identifying all firearms that have been surrendered and provide a copy of the receipt to the respondent. Within seventy-two hours after service of the order, the officer serving the order shall file the original receipt with the court and shall ensure that his or her law enforcement agency retains a copy of the receipt.

(4) Upon the sworn statement or testimony of the petitioner or of any law enforcement officer alleging that the respondent has failed to comply with the surrender of firearms as required by an order issued under this chapter, the court shall determine whether probable cause exists to believe that the respondent has failed to surrender all firearms in his or her possession, custody, or control. If probable cause exists, the court shall issue a warrant describing the firearms and authorizing a search of the locations

where the firearms are reasonably believed to be and the seizure of any firearms discovered pursuant to such search.

(5) If a person other than the respondent claims title to any firearms surrendered pursuant to this section, and he or she is determined by the law enforcement agency to be the lawful owner of the firearm, the firearm shall be returned to him or her, provided that:

(a) The firearm is removed from the respondent's custody, control, or possession and the lawful owner agrees to store the firearm in a manner such that the respondent does not have access to or control of the firearm; and

(b) The firearm is not otherwise unlawfully possessed by the owner.

(6) Upon the issuance of a one-year emergency protection order, the court shall order a new hearing date and require the respondent to appear not later than three judicial days from the issuance of the order. The court shall require a showing that the person subject to the order has surrendered any firearms in his or her custody, control, or possession. The court may dismiss the hearing upon a satisfactory showing that the respondent is in compliance with the order.

(7) All law enforcement agencies must develop policies and procedures by June 1, 2017, regarding the acceptance, storage, and return of firearms required to be surrendered under this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** RETURN AND DISPOSAL OF FIREARMS. (1) If an emergency protection order is terminated or expires without renewal, a law enforcement agency holding any firearm that has been surrendered pursuant to this chapter shall return any surrendered firearm requested by a respondent only after confirming, through a background check, that the respondent is currently eligible to own or possess firearms under federal and state law and after confirming with the court that the emergency protection order has terminated or has expired without renewal.

(2) A law enforcement agency must, if requested, provide prior notice of the return of a firearm to a respondent to family or household members of the respondent in the manner provided in RCW 9.41.340 and 9.41.345.

(3) Any firearm surrendered by a respondent pursuant to section 10 of this act that remains unclaimed by the lawful owner shall be disposed of in accordance with the law enforcement agency's policies and procedures for the disposal of firearms in police custody.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** REPORTING OF ORDERS. (1) The clerk of the court shall enter any emergency protection order or ex parte emergency protection order issued under this chapter into a statewide judicial information system on the same day such order is issued.

(2) The clerk of the court shall forward a copy of an order issued under this chapter the same day such order is issued to the appropriate law enforcement agency specified in the order. Upon receipt of the copy of the order, the law enforcement agency shall enter the order into the national instant criminal background check system, any other federal or state computer-based systems used by law enforcement or others to identify prohibited purchasers of firearms, and any computer-based criminal intelligence information system available in this state used by law enforcement agencies to list outstanding warrants. The order must remain in each system for the period stated in the order, and the law enforcement agency shall only expunge orders from the systems that have expired or terminated. Entry into the computer-based criminal intelligence information system constitutes notice to all law enforcement agencies of the existence of the order. The order is fully enforceable in any county in the state.

(3) The issuing court shall, within three judicial days after issuance of an emergency protection order or ex parte emergency protection order, forward a copy of the respondent's driver's license or identicard, or comparable information, along with the

date of order issuance, to the department of licensing. Upon receipt of the information, the department of licensing shall determine if the respondent has a concealed pistol license. If the respondent does have a concealed pistol license, the department of licensing shall immediately notify the license issuing authority which, upon receipt of such notification, shall immediately revoke the license.

(4) If an emergency protection order is terminated before its expiration date, the clerk of the court shall forward the same day a copy of the termination order to the department of licensing and the appropriate law enforcement agency specified in the termination order. Upon receipt of the order, the law enforcement agency shall promptly remove the order from any computer-based system in which it was entered pursuant to subsection (2) of this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** PENALTIES. (1) Any person who files a petition under this chapter knowing the information in such petition to be materially false, or with intent to harass the respondent, is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

(2) Any person who has in his or her custody or control, purchases, possesses, or receives a firearm with knowledge that he or she is prohibited from doing so by an order issued under this chapter is guilty of a gross misdemeanor, and further is prohibited from having in his or her custody or control, purchasing, possessing, or receiving, or attempting to purchase or receive, a firearm for a period of five years from the date the existing order expires. However, such person is guilty of a class C felony if the person has two or more previous convictions for violating an order issued under this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** LAW ENFORCEMENT RETAINS OTHER AUTHORITY. This chapter does not affect the ability of a law enforcement officer to remove a firearm or concealed pistol license from any person or conduct any search and seizure for firearms pursuant to other lawful authority.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 15.** LIABILITY. Except as provided in section 13 of this act, this chapter does not impose criminal or civil liability on any person or entity for acts or omissions related to obtaining an emergency protection order or ex parte emergency protection order including, but not limited to, reporting, declining to report, investigating, declining to investigate, filing, or declining to file a petition under this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 16.** INSTRUCTIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL. (1) The administrative office of the courts shall develop and prepare instructions and informational brochures, standard petitions and emergency protection order forms, and a court staff handbook on the emergency protection order process. The standard petition and order forms must be used after June 1, 2017, for all petitions filed and orders issued under this chapter. The instructions, brochures, forms, and handbook shall be prepared in consultation with interested persons, including representatives of gun violence prevention groups, judges, and law enforcement personnel. Materials must be based on best practices and available electronically online to the public.

(a) The instructions must be designed to assist petitioners in completing the petition, and must include a sample of a standard petition and order for protection forms.

(b) The instructions and standard petition must include a means for the petitioner to identify, with only lay knowledge, the firearms the respondent may own, possesses, receive, or have in his or her custody or control. The instructions must provide pictures of types of firearms that the petitioner may choose from to identify the relevant firearms, or an equivalent means to allow petitioners to identify firearms without requiring specific or technical knowledge regarding the firearms.

(c) The informational brochure must describe the use of and the process for obtaining, modifying, and terminating an emergency protection order under this chapter, and provide relevant forms.

(d) The emergency protection order form must include, in a conspicuous location, notice of criminal penalties resulting from violation of the order, and the following statement: "You have the sole responsibility to avoid or refrain from violating this order's provisions. Only the court can change the order and only upon written application."

(e) The court staff handbook must allow for the addition of a community resource list by the court clerk.

(2) All court clerks may create a community resource list of crisis intervention, mental health, substance abuse, interpreter, counseling, and other relevant resources serving the county in which the court is located. The court may make the community resource list available as part of or in addition to the informational brochures described in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) The administrative office of the courts shall distribute a master copy of the petition and order forms, instructions, and informational brochures to all court clerks and shall distribute a master copy of the petition and order forms to all superior, district, and municipal courts. Distribution of all documents shall, at a minimum, be in an electronic format or formats accessible to all courts and court clerks in the state.

(4) For purposes of this section, "court clerks" means court administrators in courts of limited jurisdiction and elected court clerks.

(5) The administrative office of the courts shall determine the significant non-English speaking or limited English speaking populations in the state. The administrator shall then arrange for translation of the instructions and informational brochures required by this section, which shall contain a sample of the standard petition and order for protection forms, into the languages spoken by those significant non-English speaking populations and shall distribute a master copy of the translated instructions and informational brochures to all court clerks by December 1, 2017.

(6) The administrative office of the courts shall update the instructions, brochures, standard petition and emergency protection order forms, and court staff handbook as necessary, including when changes in the law make an update necessary.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 17.** SEVERABILITY. If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 18.** Sections 1 through 16 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 7 RCW.

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